

Māori Archives and Records

Claire Hall

[Editor's note: As part of the 2016 ARANZ Symposium, a panel was convened on "Māori archives, iwi, networks and researchers." Panellists Paul Diamond, Honiana Love, and Claire Hall came together to discuss the challenges facing iwi and Māori researching and caring for archives, and how the broader archival community can contribute to this work. Below are Paul Diamond's opening remarks and a response by Claire Hall]

In April 2012, ARANZ held a seminar on Māori Archives and Records, *Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho – Treasures Passed Down*. At the seminar, my colleagues from the Department of Internal Affairs and I spoke about how our institutions were working with Māori and the Māori collections we care for.

Another speaker, Tamati Kruger, spoke about the approach by Ngāi Tūhoe to archives and records. Since then, Tūhoe have settled their historical Treaty claims with the Government, and established two tribal facilities, Te Kura Whare and Te Wharepuri. These have been described as not a library, not a museum, an archive or an exhibition, but a Tūhoe space celebrating Tūhoetanga.

There are other examples of iwi and Māori working to establish their own repositories run according to their own tikanga and practices. These examples illustrate how the archival landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand has changed, as the end of the historical Treaty claims process looms, and the focus shifts to the post settlement world.

In the 2012 seminar, Tamati Kruger talked about how remembering things is a requirement of good civilisation, and how he saw archives as a building block of the future.

Inspired by this, for this session, we decided to turn the lens around from where we looked in 2012, and find out more about where iwi are at in their aspirations to care for their own archives, and how the profession can support this work.

Another inspiration is a recent *Archifacts* essay by Jared Davidson, containing provocations for the profession which we'll also discuss.

Claire Hall's response

Introduction

Tēnā rā tātou te whānau. He mihi manahau, he mihi maihoa tēnei i a kotou katou e huihui mai i te rangi nei kia whakanui i te kaupapa whakahirahira o te wā, te huringa tau 40 o ARANZ. Kei te mihi, kei te mihi.

I thought I'd start with a bit of background on how I came to be here with you all today, speaking to you all about my work with Te Pūte Routiriata o Taranaki, Te Reo o Taranaki's community archive.

Archiving is one of four pou, or pillars, of the Taranaki reo revitalisation strategy. (For those of you with an interest in the origins and foundations of Te Pūtē Routiriata o Te Reo o Taranaki, Honiana Love and I wrote an article for *Archifacts* back in 2011 on our work setting up a prototype digital archive, and taking stock at the end of the first significant phase of work).

My mahi for Te Reo o Taranaki as archive manager covers a multitude of work streams; teacher, community and digital archivist, funding application guru, report writer – among other things. It's a varied and rewarding role, and I've gained many of the requisite skills on the job. Of course the need to understand the principles and language of archiving is essential. But the defining aspect is a grounding in Taranaki reo me ōna tikanga, and connections with Taranaki iwi whānui. Without these, there's no way I could do this mahi.

Our work embodies one of the greatest challenges facing iwi, hapū & whānau intent on retaining tino rangatiratanga over their own collections and mātaruanga: how to maintain professional standards of classical archiving without perpetuating the oppression that led to significant loss of mātauranga through our colonial history? This is a challenge not only for institutions with significant collections of mātauranga Māori, as outlined in Jared Davidson's article (more on that later). It's also a challenge for iwi whānui wishing to go it alone, and one for which I'm particularly interested in finding solutions.

Who am I representing here today? I'm here at the bidding of Taranaki whānui, not here as a commentator, here as part of that whānau - tūpuna, kuia, iwi, hapū and whānau. 'Ehara tenei he toa takitahi he toa takitini rānei'. The successes and achievements I've been part of within Te Reo o Taranaki are not mine alone, they are owned by the whole community. And in particular I acknowledge those who set up Te Reo o Taranaki some three decades ago. Ko te hōkai nei ōu rātou tapuwae

(today's road follows the shape of their footprints). I'm simply following the direction those tūpuna set, their instruction for this path to be followed. Albeit bringing some new tools and methods to the kaupapa.

But as Honiana pointed out in her introduction, as with all of us in the room, I'm here - in this space and sector - with my own cultural bias. I'm a Pākehā woman privileged to be entrusted with a place to work in te ao Māori. I'm critically aware of the nuances and responsibilities that accompany my place, and constantly adjust for that.

Jared Davidson's article – my response

Paul has asked us to respond to Jared Davidson's article: Colonial Continuum – Archives Access & Power.¹

Firstly, I'm sincerely grateful for this article, ka nui rawa atu te mihi ki a koe e Jared. Your writing has given me really useful language and frame of reference for sharing my work within Te Pūtē Routiriata, and more broadly within Te Reo o Taranaki with the ARANZ whānau today. The following response draws on and extends the excellent range of statements and sources within Jared's piece.

Your apparently simple upfront statement: 'The use of public records is at the heart of my job' isn't quite as straightforward as it first appears. The role of the public archive – and archivist – represents so much of the consternation and discussion that I encounter when teaching an archiving awareness for Te Reo o Taranaki. I'll talk a little more about that in a moment.

The image you present of yourself "being constantly challenged" resonated with me. Like Jared's, my background includes stints working for Crown agencies and government institutions – both as a researcher and facilitator of public access. It was this experience that prompted me to respond, leading to my present work in indigenous ao Māori archiving space.

Or as Jared puts it, "... motivates my action to be more than the embodiment of settler colonialism". Jared appropriately quotes Sven Lindquist on this: "I'd had my share of the booty, so I had to take my share of the responsibility too."

This choice is significant – it marks a shift from being the barrier between tāngata whenua and their tūpuna to someone that harnesses their institutional knowledge to create alternative pathways.

Within Te Reo o Taranaki, I've done that in three key ways: by building a flax-roots, pan-iwi archive for ngā iwi katoa nō Taranaki tae

noa ki Taranaki whānui ki ngā hau e whā, by working within and alongside institutions to come up with responsive methods of practice, and by developing aronga and kaupapa Māori training programmes in archive-based topics. These courses build iwi, hapū & hāpori understanding of the perceptibly out-of-reach mainstream GLAM sector.

Jared's concession that (in the words of Lorenzo Veracini) "settler colonialism is global, transnational, and as much a thing of a past as a thing of the present ... a resilient form that rarely ends" is a really important one. It's a reality that I suggest the majority in our sector may still disagree with. But based on my experience this is an absolute truth: colonialism – and all its ugly trappings – is perpetuated by mainstream modes of practice. How we collectively respond to this is the crux of what we need to confront.

As per Waziyatawin's interpretation: "Colonialism has set the parameters of our imagination to constrain our vision of what is possible".² This applies to both Māori and Pākehā alike.

In his article, Jared touches on the very present and pressing issue of cultural redress. I place alongside this concentrated efforts to revitalise reo māori me ōna tikanga. Settlement-led cultural redress and tāngata whenua-led cultural revitalisation efforts present enormous opportunities for meaningful engagement within the GLAM sector. At an institutional level I'm talking about letters of commitment (it would be great to see these efforts properly resourced): at hapū and hāpori level I refer to opportunities for communities to create their own indigenous archiving systems.

For this to happen, iwi & hapū must also be resourced to receive the tangible and intangible taonga being repatriated. Even digital repatriation (with originals staying in institutions) creates resourcing and skill development needs. I suggest a more formalised Māori archives network should be at the forefront of this effort – isolation is perhaps the greatest threat to the success of kaupapa and aronga driven initiative.

Last year, I had the good fortune to travel to Washington to attend the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums conference. Here, I saw a sector in which tribal archives have credence and credibility. They are well-resourced through grant funding. Institutions like the Library of Congress run indigenous archive training pitched at what's possible – rather than what's ideal. Tribal archives are recognised as a vital part of the sector rather than an imperfect solution, poor cousin, little brother, or dumb native. I was really impressed by what I saw and see huge potential for us to run with this model in Aotearoa.

This can't happen without mainstream institutional support. Rather, institutions are critical to success. I agree entirely with Laura Stoler's observation that: '... we cannot change the past; nor should we abandon the core archival principles that help illuminate it'.³ There is a place for classical archival principles in iwi archiving. How that is communicated, how these principles are offered and taught will ultimately determine their take up. How do you – the mainstream archivist – react when the cardboard box is pulled out from under the bed? And against your best advice, that's deemed the best place for it to be, to stay? Or when whānau want to do better for precious records that fall short of your view on what is, and what isn't, worthy of archival investment? Your responses to those questions are critical. Handled carelessly, your best advice is just another source of mamae.

As Jared writes, no matter how we justify or frame it, 'colonial collecting endeavor is not innocent'. In spite of any grievance associated with colonial collecting, we must be grateful that these are the collections that exist. Our efforts to revitalise Taranaki reo me ōna tikanga – kia whakakiikii i te whāwhārua (to fill the void left by wholesale land confiscations and the deliberate decimation of language and cultural norms) – draw heavily on the colonial corpus held within institutional collections. This is yet another reason the opportunity to re-contextualise, reassess and re-describe the mātauranga sitting in mainstream archives is so critical. I consider this part of the active and evolving process of cultural redress.

Through my teaching work, I can detail many examples of whānau being deprived kaitiakitanga of their collections, being denied access to the fragments of history that directly link them to their mātua tūpuna.

Postscript

Following the ARANZ conference, I shared Jared's article with a group of Te Reo o Taranaki archiving students. We discussed Jared's kaupapa and tikanga framework.⁴ I invited students to identify which, of the tikanga principles listed, they deemed most significant to their practice as hapū, whānau and hāpori archivists (by ranking them 1-9 from most to least significant to them individually). The highest rated values (based on collective responses) were kotahitanga and wairuatanga respectively; next – kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, pūkengatanga, rangatiratanga and whakapapa rated equally; followed by ukaipōtanga and whanaungatanga. While by no means scientific, it's an interesting and revealing result which I'll repeat in 2017.

Endnotes

1. Jared Davidson, "The Colonial Continuum: Archives, Access and Power," *Archifacts* (April 2015).
2. Waziyatawin, 'Colonialism on the Ground' in *Unsettling Ourselves: Reflections and Resources for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality*, Minnesota: Unsettling Minnesota, 2009, p.192. Quoted in Davidson, "The Colonial Continuum."
3. Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2007, p.87. Quoted in Davidson, The Colonial Continuum.
4. Davidson, "The Colonial Continuum," p. 23.